



Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

MAR 18 1998

The Honorable Don Young  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2331 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for your letter dated January 5, 1998, on behalf of your constituent, Georgianna Zimmerle, Borough Manager, Ketchikan, Alaska, concerning the placement and construction of facilities for the provision of personal wireless services and radio and television broadcast services in her community. Your constituent's letter refers to issues being considered in three proceedings that are pending before the Commission. In MM Docket No. 97-182, the Commission has sought comments on a Petition for Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making filed by the National Association for Broadcasters and the Association for Maximum Service Television. In this proceeding, the petitioners ask the Commission to adopt a rule limiting the exercise of State and local zoning authority with respect to broadcast transmission facilities in order to facilitate the rapid build-out of digital television facilities, as required by the Commission's rules to fulfill Congress' mandate. In WT Docket No. 97-192, the Commission has sought comment on proposed procedures for reviewing requests for relief from State and local regulations that are alleged to impermissibly regulate the siting of personal wireless service facilities based on the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions, and related matters. Finally, in DA 96-2140 and FCC 97-264, the Commission twice sought comments on a Petition for Declaratory Ruling filed by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association seeking relief from certain State and local moratoria that have been imposed on the siting of commercial mobile radio service facilities.

Because all of these proceedings are still pending, we cannot comment on the merits of the issues at this time. However, I can assure you that the Commission is committed to providing a full opportunity for all interested parties to participate. The Commission has formally sought public comment in all three proceedings and, as a result, has received numerous comments from State and local governments, service providers, and the public at large. Your letter, your constituent's letter, as well as this response, will be placed in the record of all three proceedings and will be given full consideration.

At the same time, the Commission is actively pursuing initiatives that we hope will render any Commission action limiting State and local authority unnecessary. Commission staff, working with the Commission's Local and State Government Advisory Committee, is bringing together representatives of industry and municipal governments to discuss mutually acceptable solutions to the challenges posed by facilities siting. Chairman Kennard has stated that preemption of local zoning authority should be a remedy of last resort, and that the Commission should not consider preemption until the possibilities for constructive dialogue have been exhausted.

Further information regarding the Commission's policies toward personal wireless service facilities siting, including many of the comments in the two proceedings involving personal wireless service facilities, is available on the Commission's internet site at <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/siting>.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,



*for* Steven E. Weingarten  
Acting Chief, Commercial Wireless Division  
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

cc: CWD

Dockets (2)

John Conwell

j:\congress\9800812

**DON YOUNG**  
CONGRESSMAN FOR ALL ALASKA  
**WASHINGTON OFFICE**  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 5, 1998

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Lou Sizemore, Congressional Specialist  
Federal Communications Commission, Congressional Affairs  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Sizemore:

Enclosed please find correspondence from Georgianna Zimmerle, Ketchikan Gateway Borough Manager, regarding the FCC's interpretation of the Telecommunication Act of 1996. Further information is provided in the enclosure.

Specifically, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough strongly believes that the FCC has preempted the local zoning of cellular, television and radio towers. Ms. Zimmerle states that both Congress and the courts have long recognized zoning as a local function and that the 1996 Telecommunications Act expressly leaves this task to the local entity. I would appreciate your comments and opinions about Ms. Zimmerle's letter.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG  
Congressman for all Alaska

DY/lb  
enclosure

NTB  
97-182  
812

# **KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH**

Office of the Borough Manager • 344 Front Street • Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Georgianna Zimmerle

Borough Manager

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December 22, 1997

Honorable Donald E. Young  
United States Congressman  
2111 Rayburn Building  
Washington D.C. 20515-0201

Dear Congressman Young:

We are writing you about the Federal Communications Commission and its attempts to preempt local zoning of cellular, radio and TV towers by making the FCC the "Federal Zoning Commission" for all cellular telephone and broadcast towers. Both Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a peculiarly local function. Please immediately contact the FCC and tell it to stop these efforts which violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism.

In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress expressly reaffirmed local zoning authority over cellular towers. It told the FCC to stop all rule-making where the FCC was attempting to become a Federal Zoning Commission for such towers. Despite this instruction from Congress, the FCC is now attempting to preempt local zoning authority in three different rule makings.

Cellular Towers - Radiation: Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Telecommunications Act with the sole exception that municipalities cannot regulate the radiation from cellular antennas if it is within limits set by the FCC. The FCC is attempting to have the "exception swallow the rule" by using the limited

authority Congress gave it over cellular tower radiation to review and reverse any cellular zoning decision in the U.S. which it finds is "tainted" by radiation concerns, even if the decision is otherwise perfectly permissible. In fact, the FCC is saying that it can "second guess" what the true reasons for a municipality's decision are, need not be bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality and doesn't even need to wait until a local planning decision is final before the FCC acts.

Some of our citizens are concerned about the radiation from cellular towers. We cannot prevent them from mentioning their concerns in a public hearing. In its rule making the FCC is saying that if any citizen raises this issue that this is sufficient basis for a cellular zoning decision to immediately be taken over by the FCC and potentially reversed, even if the municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on property values or aesthetics.

**Cellular Towers - Moratoria:** Relatedly the FCC is proposing a rule banning the moratoria that some municipalities impose on cellular towers while they revise their zoning ordinances to accommodate the increase in the numbers of these towers. Again, this violates the Constitution and the directive from Congress preventing the FCC from becoming a Federal Zoning Commission.

**Radio/TV Towers:** The FCC's proposed rule on radio and TV towers is as bad: It sets an artificial limit of 21 to 45 days for municipalities to act on any local permit (environmental, building permit, zoning or other). Any permit request is automatically deemed granted if the municipality doesn't act in this timeframe, even if the application is incomplete or clearly violates local law. And the FCC's proposed rule would prevent municipalities from considering the impacts such towers have on property values, the environment or aesthetics. Even safety requirements could be overridden by the FCC! And all appeals of zoning and permit denials would go to the FCC, not to the local courts.

This proposal is astounding when broadcast towers are some of the tallest structures known to man -- over 2,000 feet tall, taller than the Empire State Building. The FCC claims these changes are needed to allow TV

stations to switch to High Definition Television quickly. But *The Wall Street Journal* and trade magazines state there is no way the FCC and broadcasters will meet the current schedule anyway, so there is no need to violate the rights of municipalities and their residents just to meet an artificial deadline.

These actions represent a power grab by the FCC to become the Federal Zoning Commission for cellular towers and broadcast towers. They violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism. This is particularly true given that the FCC is a single purpose agency, with no zoning expertise, that never saw a tower it didn't like.

Please do three things to stop the FCC: First, write new FCC Chairman William Kennard and FCC Commissioners Susan Hess, Harold Furchtgott-Roth, Michael Powell and Gloria Tristani telling them to stop this intrusion on local zoning authority in cases WT 97-197, MM Docket 97-182 and DA 96-2140; second, join in the "Dear Colleague Letter" currently being prepared to go to the FCC from many members of Congress; and third, oppose any effort by Congress to grant the FCC the power to act as a "Federal Zoning Commission" and preempt local zoning authority.

The following people at national municipal organizations are familiar with the FCC's proposed rules and municipalities' objections to them: Barrie Tabin at the National League of Cities, 202/626-3194; Eileen Huggard at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, 703/506-3275; Robert Fogel at the National Association of Counties, 202/393-6226; Kevin McCarty at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 202/293-7330; and Cheryl Maynard at the American Planning Association, 202/372-0011. We urge you to call them if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



Georgianna Zimmerle  
Borough Manager

cc: Senator John McCain  
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Senator Dianné Feinstein  
Representative W. J. Tauzin  
Representative John Dingell  
Representative James Moran  
Representative Joe Barton  
Ms. Eileen Huggard  
Mr. Kevin McCarty

Senator Conrad Burns  
Senator Slade Gorton  
Representative Tom Bliley  
Representative Edward J. Markey  
Representative Bob Goodlatte  
Representative Bart Stupak  
Ms. Barrie Tabin  
Mr. Robert Fogel  
Ms. Cheryl Maynard